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What the plain view perceives is neither obvious nor obscure

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CONTENTS

		PAGE
COMMENTARY		133
THE ETHICAL MOVEMENT DURING SEVENTY YEARS	H. J. BLACKHAM	137
SOME RECOLLECTIONS	JOHN MURPHY	150
BOOK REVIEWS:—		
THE RATIONALIST ANNUAL, 1946		155
EUROPE SPEAKS		*Inside Back Cover*

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COMMENTARY

SAVING EUROPE. (1) Every one of us is morally bound to make sacrifices for the human needs of Europe: because they are immensely great and urgent and the utmost that can be done will not suffice to meet them; because privation bears hardest on the weakest and the weakest include the promise of regeneration; because the present lot of mankind is such that it is only by good fortune that we individually happen to be amongst those who are asked to help and not amongst those who depend on that help; because large-scale, resolute, physical help is the present means to a future for European civilization, whose disintegration is still within sight of irreparable disaster.

(2) For psychological, moral, political, and practical reasons, relief should be administered by a government authority, national or local, in the country to which it is sent. This is a principle of great importance to which our belief in voluntary action has prevented our giving proper weight. To do good in the wrong way may be a higher form of evil, but its recognizable effects are indistinguishable from vulgar wrong-doing. It would be easy to exaggerate the evil consequence of distributing relief in Europe through voluntary humanitarian agencies; the evils are nevertheless real, and they are not clearly enough recognized in this country. Fortunately this time it seems that the rule is to be distribution by national authorities, and U.N.R.R.A., under regulations, deals only with governments. There are still many agencies in the field handling relief in one way and another; which is probably a good thing in the long run, if the co-ordinating authorities can master them soon enough.

(3) The vastness of the need throws heavy emphasis on the importance of priorities. In practice, some must get and some must go without; perhaps in theory all will get an equal insufficiency. Are we to pretend that priorities are repugnant to humanitarian principles? Do we want to be sentimental, wilfully blind to the facts, oblivious of the demands of justice and of the principles of regeneration? These questions are asked because a relief appeal in this country cannot be put on a national footing, cannot obtain the backing of all parties, all creeds, all other organized interests, unless priorities are made conspicuous by their absence. No mention must be made of children or of the victims of the concentration camps. Everybody knows that hypocrisy is a British weakness; one is inclined to fear that faithfulness to our vices has become a superstition when we make such efforts to be wrong. Partly it is the influence of the humanitarian organizations, whose prestige is British prestige and whose advice is a law in these matters. Their fanatical intention to put humanitarian principles before the principles of justice and of social reconstruction is one, but only one, of the reasons

why they are unfit to administer relief in Europe. It is for the public who respond to these appeals clamorously to insist on proper priorities and on the administration of relief by government authorities.

Priorities, of course, mean also a choice for the British public between one European people in need and another. Can it be assumed that the competitive power of the different appeal campaigns represents the relative urgency of the various needs? Unfortunately not. People will give where their affections are engaged, and where they are convinced that they are relieving the greatest mass of misery. There can be no doubt that the greatest misery, and, therefore, the greatest danger, this winter, lies in those parts of Europe which have received a vast influx of dispossessed and destitute Germans. Other needs are real and serious; this one is unparalleled. And for the dispossession and destitution of these people the United Nations have to bear final responsibility.

LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT. The war, as everybody knows, was not merely a war between nation states but was also a struggle of interests within society. There was no opportunity in this country for that phase of the struggle to develop; the issue was not forced, and the general election result merely registered the *bouleversement* of political forces in Europe which was one decisive meaning of victory over Fascism. Elsewhere in Europe, and especially in the states which lie between Russia and Germany, the victory is being consolidated within society by the victors. It has not yet been possible for free general elections in the proper sense to be held, and meanwhile the Communists as the most active, resolute, organized, anti-fascist political element in modern society are in most of these countries dominant. As ministers of Justice, of the Interior, of Education, of Information (controlling the Press), they are able to eliminate their political opponents in carrying out the good work of de-nazification. In the occupied countries the established interests for the most part made their peace in one way or another with the powers that be.' In this life and death struggle they must share the downfall of the powers they backed. Meanwhile, the mass of the people, who are neither communists nor fascists nor owners of large interests, play no part in the drama which still goes on.

There are, then, in this part of Europe, four or five illegitimate governments (let Czechoslovakia serve for an example) engaged in finishing off their political opponents. Of course, the sacred task of de-nazification has all the logic of the war behind it, and when British political idealism breathes reproach it lays itself open to effective retort. Democratic purism apart, does it really matter? Professor Ferrero has argued with force, and has called history to witness, that peace cannot exist and endure between states in which revolutionary governments have defied the current conception of legitimacy. Unless a government has an unchallenged title to rule, it is bound to fear the people and to

resort to increasing doses of force and fraud. "Among all the evils from which mankind has suffered, the reciprocal fear on the part of a government and its subjects has been the most terrible." The tension which is created leads to war as the only solution. This analysis does not reveal a necessity of history, but it certainly does call attention to a lively danger which the United Nations Organization cannot neglect. And it is sufficiently true that an illegitimate government is bound to be repressive and to kill out public spirit and political capacity, and that this is an exceedingly grave danger to modern mass democracies. Mill's arguments on Liberty and on Representative Government are not to be set aside.

What is the moral? In the modern world the two principles of political democracy and economic democracy are inseparable; they are necessary public standards. No representative government which does not provide a social programme equal to the needs of the people measured by recognized modern standards can have the respect of the world; and neither can a government which does not depend on or make way for representative institutions. The United Nations Organization can form and enforce this common standard by effective world opinion, and indeed its institutions and declared objects commit its members to this purpose. That is all right on paper. Some of the offenders are already members of the new organization, which is very much to the good; for the publicity and close contacts of common membership are bound to generate steady pressure in the right direction if the organization makes any attempt to do its professed job. At any rate, there is more hope of exerting constructive, and multi-lateral, influence in this way than by long-range bombardment in the public utterances of Foreign Secretaries.

THE WORLD'S YOUTH. The sixty-three national youth delegations which assembled in conference in London during November did represent the most active organizations of youth throughout the world; and this was particularly important because the main object of the Conference was to set up a representative international body to develop co-operation and intercourse between young people of all nations. Very unfortunately for this purpose no young element in defeated Germany or Japan was represented. Apart from the formal work of setting up the new organization, the resounding themes of discussion were: Peace, Freedom, Democracy. It is not surprising on the early morrow of hard-won victory over a formidable destroyer of peace, freedom, and democracy that the Conference understood each of these three concepts to mean one and the same concrete thing, viz., anti-fascism. This disquieting simplification is not at all to be attributed to the cheerful irresponsibiilty of youth. On the contrary, these young people remembered very sharply the suffering of their own bodies and minds and that of their friends, and they

knew the embodied cause. It ought to be expected that the consciousness of a young European to-day will be atavistic, the consciousness of a primitive. What stable society has he known, what opportunity has he had of growing up in the slow assimilation of the achievements, principles, and ideals of western civilization? The actual situation appears to be not nearly so bad as one ought to expect. Young Europeans seem to have a remarkable grip on the possibilities of the modern world, which is the main thing. Nevertheless, there is a lost background, and it is a serious and a disconcerting loss. It will be repaired in time, if civilisation is really saved in Europe—and it is still too soon for us to be quite sure about that. Meanwhile, the international intercourse of young people is more important than ever, and to promote it should be a national policy.

CHRISTIAN ENGLAND. *The Conversion of England,* the report of the Commission on Evangelism, has been debated by the Church Assembly, commended to the parochial church councils, and referred for action to a council for evangelism. It was an inept document, and criticism was not spared in the Assembly. To assume that the Christian case is unanswerable and that every alternative is obviously played out and unworthy of attention, this is blindness putting itself forward to lead, and it is a sorry spectacle. The Anglican church used to have intellectual standards. The Bishop of Rochester in putting forward the report said that the problem centred in the 10 per cent. inside the church which had become infected with the spirit of the age in the original sin of humanism. This, of course, is entirely the business of the church, but it is permissible to remark that if this was really recognized as the core of the problem, then the report seems all the more offensive in tone and foolish in character. In its Gothic period the church had no need to apologize. ("Who will refute a Mass of Palestrina, or who will convict Raphael's Madonna of error?") And in ages of criticism it defended its doctrines with a becoming sense of the difficulty of doing so. Why should it vulgarize itself now by shallow pretensions? In the 18th century when scepticism was prevalent in fashionable society, all parties in the church counted on the never-to-be-shaken constancy of the multitude. To-day the masses have fallen away, and Christianity has its firmest hold where adventurous theologians have established a following. The Commission might have made a more intelligent approach to their problem if they had carefully weighed some of these considerations.

One justification the Commission does have for its stupid assumptions: they are precisely the official and semi-official assumptions of thought and administration in this country, the assumptions of the national Press and of the B.B.C.

THE ETHICAL MOVEMENT DURING SEVENTY YEARS

IN 1876, Felix Adler, son of a leading Rabbi of New York, and trained and designated as his father's successor, forsook the Hebrew faith and made himself leader of a new radical religious movement. His theism had already been sapped by early reflection when he went as a graduate of Columbia to study in the University of Berlin, and the lectures which he heard there and, above all, his study of the critical philosophy of Kant undermined the whole fabric of his father's religion. When he returned to New York, the reassurance and persuasion of leading members of his own community could not induce him to take office in the Hebrew ministry as a liberal or modernist. He separated himself from the faith of his people and soon afterwards took the steps which led to his forming the Ethical Movement.

It is worth while to recall the immense stimulus and fertilizing influence of the German universities throughout the nineteenth century, and to recognize the part which they played in the development of the modern world after the eclipse of the Anglo-French civilization of the eighteenth century. Mr. Wickham Steed told Dr. Coit that when he was a student at Berlin he took a problem in Spinoza to Paulsen, who exclaimed, "I can't understand why you Englishmen come to Germany to study philosophy when you've got everything stated by your own philosophers; and much better said." It is a remark which should be recorded for the glory of Paulsen, and against the legend of the German professor; but it is not objectively true. The German universities in the nineteenth century drew the best students from all over the world, as the universities of Bologna, Paris, and Oxford drew the brightest spirits of Europe in the thirteenth, and for the same reason. In organization, methods, and attainments they had no rivals. German speculative genius in philosophy and theology discovered a new world for the empire of the imagination; German industrious fidelity in the empirical sciences and historical research created new studies and new standards; German teachers were the exponents of a new learning and a new spirit. Of course the Idea of Comedy could be applied to the whole performance, and Meredith could show that civilization remains on this side of the Rhine. But since the German professor became a figure of fun and the German university a barracks for the higher bureaucracy, events have met the friendly malice of civilized criticism: the comic spirit is out of place now. There is no greater tragedy in the whole course of history. It is a theme for protracted meditation, and we have not yet begun to see what its outcome will be. Nevertheless, it is historically safe to say that the intellectual and spiritual influence of Germany in the nineteenth century is only to be measured by comparison with influences of the magnitude and permanence of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the French Revolution. Germany is the profoundest source of modern movements, and of the modern spirit.

In religion, the distinctive effect of German philosophic thought and historical scholarship was not by any means merely to break the fetters of Christian dogmatism. That reading of history is merely a glance at one of the chapters. The Christian faith has never been unquestioned, and since the seventeenth century it has been on the defensive. Emerson remarks that Stoicism has always been attractive to the intellectual and cultivated; and one may qualify that by adding: if not Stoicism, then some other moralizing system. Kant, a physicist, pivots his system on the categorical imperative, and Hume, a sceptic, makes ethics his real life-work and the core of his system. But the point is that Christian debate throughout the eighteenth century was a rationalist debate, a submission to the judgment of common sense. As Mark Pattison sums it up in his essay, *Tendencies of Religious Thought in England,* 1688-1750, "the title of Locke's treatise 'The Reasonableness of Christianity' may be said to have been the solitary thesis of Christian theology in England for great part of a century." The question in debate was the sufficiency of Natural Religion. "The natural law of right and duty, argued the Deists, is so absolutely perfect that God could not add anything to it. It is commensurate with all the real relations in which man stands. To suppose that God has created artificial relations, and laid upon man positive precepts, is to take away the very notion of morality. The moral law is nothing but the conditions of our actual being, apparent alike to those of the meanest and of the highest capacity. It is inconsistent with this to suppose that God has gone on to enact arbitrary statutes, and to declare them to man in an obscure and uncertain light." Natural Religion was common ground which the Christian apologists traversed with their opponents before they called attention to the additional sanctions of revealed religion. To the Deists these were obnoxious because they undermined the disinterestedness of morality: therefore they could not be instituted by God. The Deists would establish the obligation of morality on independent grounds (either with Cudworth, the seventeenth century Cambridge Platonist, as the cognition of objective Ideas, or with the later Shaftesbury on the far different foundation of empirical psychology—a difference of approach that was not left behind with the eighteenth century), and thus dispense with the need, and controvert the principle, of divine intervention to secure the good behaviour of man in the world—which was assumed by both sides to have been the sole purpose of revelation, if revelation there had been. This debate maintained as nearly as controversy may the equilibrium of action and reaction without dialectical movement, for there was next to no difference between the two sides in their basic assumptions and their general purpose. Joseph Butler's *Analogy of Religion* sums up the argument as it had gone on for half a century. It is the cumulative effect of the evidence upon the balance of probability which the author relies on to turn the scale in favour of revealed religion. His work is the triumph of a mind all too well aware of the difficulty of answering the religious arguments of the

day at the dinner table or within the limits of conversation. The doubtfulness was real and it took a powerful mind to reach beyond it. But in morals there was no such doubtfulness, and in his *Dissertation of the Nature of Virtue,* and the Preface to the Sermons, and the Sermons *Upon Human Nature* there is a ringing certitude; and in the confident march of the argument it is not immediately seen what a masterly sifting of all previous authors is going on. Let Pattison sum up the eighteenth century Christian debate in a sentence which speaks for both sides: "It has enforced the truths of natural morality with a solidity of argument and variety of proof which they have not received since the Stoical epoch, if then." That this concentration of all sides on exhibiting (in one way or the other) the moral government of the world was not conspicuously successful in bettering the behaviour of men is reflected in the rise of Methodism preaching a different gospel, and to a different public. It is to the Evangelical influence, with its fulcrum in the French Revolution, that Elie Halévy traces the moral renovation of England in the nineteenth century: but this was the reform movement of a new social world. The rationalist tradition lingered on in the Paley school examining the historical evidences for the proof of Christianity. It needed the original and massive work of the Germans to make this a fruitful line of approach. Even at the end of the century Adler complains of the narrow theology of the lectures on Christian Evidences as taught in Columbia College when he was a student; and until even more recent times Paley was compulsory reading (an orientation course!) for undergraduates at Cambridge.

What German philosophy, and later German historical research, did was, on the one hand, to give a new impulse to speculative Protestant theology (which has not yet run its course), and, on the other hand, to transpose the relations of religion and morality by making religion dependent upon morality in a radical way not contemplated in the Natural Religion of the eighteenth century: as a matter of history, theology was a projection of moral ideas; as a matter of philosophy, religious truths had status and validity simply as postulates of the moral consciousness. Kant insisted, like Butler, that the consciousness of moral obligation is a constituent part of our nature. Like Butler, and more rigorous than any Deist, he will not have the autonomy of the conscience impaired by dependence upon any kind of external sanction. But, unlike Butler or the Deists, his radical criticism of the principles of knowledge made him unable to assume the ground of Natural Religion, the existence of God, the Author of Nature, as "often proved with accumulated evidence; from the argument of analogy and final causes; from abstract reasonings; from the most ancient tradition and testimony; and from the general consent of mankind" (*The Analogy of Religion*). Kant demolished this universal assumption. J. M. Robertson remarks that in practice Kant ends at the point of view of the Deists. This may be true, but it is misleading, for Kant destroyed the point of view of the

Deists. It was the stately façade of Natural Religion which he blasted, not the Christian manger. He reaffirmed belief in the existence of God and in personal immortality, but solely as necessary in practice for the carrying out of the moral law; the validity of these religious truths was purely and literally a practical validity, their material necessity for the fulfilment of moral obligation—not as sanctions, but as actual means. The Author of Nature was not the Father of the moral consciousness, but a foetus curled within its womb, and not even destined to be born. This really was a new point of view.

Kant's ethical position was irrational and untenable, but it was impressive and effective, and fortified by the prestige of his imposing systematic construction it has maintained a lasting influence far greater than its real worth. The very fact that it is both completely untenable and authoritative and striking has made it a good starting-point and a fruitful stimulus in ethical thinking. It has probably been a good deal more fruitful than the far saner work of Butler; and it is perhaps one of the examples of error spreading more light than truth. His influence on religion, on the other hand, ought to have been far more decisive than in fact it has been. He destroyed the point of view of the Deists, the possibility of Natural Religion, a pure, rational religion of verifiable truth. Yet the nineteenth century, and especially in Germany, starts new quests for the essence of Christianity, and abounds in new sects seeking to found a new religion on absolute truth, for example, the Free Congregations whose religion is the pursuit of the true, the good, and the beautiful conceived as an ideal unity. F. A. Lange in the Fourth Section of the Second Book of his *History of Materialism* brings under review the principles and claims of these new religious movements, and he examines the personal positions of Friedrich Ueberweg and of David Friedrich Strauss, who held aloof from the religious movements although in each a long philosophical development issued in similar religious views. Lange had no difficulty in showing that in so far as the new sects claimed absolute truth for their religion and sought to make its object and its doctrine invulnerable to further criticism, they fell into the simplicity of the orthodox, and their rationalism was vain. They ought to have learned from Kant that after the application of reason to religion, there is nothing left. To search for a residual or ultimate doctrinal truth on which to refound religion was a hopeless quest and a mistake in principle. Those who tried it must sooner or later die by their own medicine. On the other hand, Schleiermacher was right to revive the old religion by bringing out its ethical and ideal content; and he was powerfully successful. Fichte was right to handle freely and aesthetically the old religion as an instrument of his vehement ethical idealism. There was in this bold handling of the old religion a broad correspondence with human interests and needs and with the ethical end of religion, an ideal truth, conspicuously lacking in the preoccupation with a search for an inviolable object of religion. Lange was able to show that in the develop-

ment of the historical religions (including Stoicism) there had in the creative periods been a free aesthetic and intellectual handling of the religious material; and that it was by its ethical idealism, not by its apologetics, that the church maintained itself. Lange uses many other arguments to bring home his point that it is not by the final truth of their doctrines that religions are to be compared and judged (because that claim to truth rests on a misconception), but by their ethical idealism, their power to transform the collective aims of civilization, to redeem mankind from ethical materialism. Lange was writing in Germany towards the end of the last century, and he was not writing as an academic philosopher, an historian of ideas, for he was passionately concerned with the problem of religion because he was passionately concerned with the problem of ethical materialism which was threatening to destroy industrial civilzation. He felt that he was living and writing on the eve of a religious and social revolution. He felt and feared that it might be an earthquake which would throw down the past epoch in ruins. He was right; and we who have lived through the age of political religions, and are still living in the ruins, are separated from him by what he feared and by the changes it has brought. The problem cannot be the same for us to-day. But we have still to learn from him. Our problem still starts there, in that epoch which has been destroyed; and until we have seen it with Lange's eyes, we are hardly likely to have a very sure understanding of what the problem is.

In a postscript to his book Lange warmly welcomes Mill's *Three Essays on Religion,* which had just been published, recognizing in Mill's conclusions agreement with his own. In one of the earlier of these essays, Mill says, "The essence of religion is the strong and earnest direction of the emotions and desires towards an ideal object, recognized as of the highest excellence, and as rightfully paramount over all selfish objects of desire. This condition is fulfilled by the Religion of Humanity in as eminent a degree, and in as high a sense, as by the supernatural religions even in their best manifestations, and far more so than in any of their others . . . . It is not only entitled to be called a religion: it is a better religion than any of those which are ordinarily called by that title." The sharpness of Mill's words expresses not only the strength of his own commitment but also a rebuke to those who sophisticate their understanding to defend Christianity for the sake of its supposed social utility ("the whole of the prevalent metaphysics of the present century is one tissue of suborned evidence in favour of religion"—*une trahison des clercs*). In the last essay, written later, Mill allows that this Religion of Humanity or of Duty would be "aided and fortified" by the consolations of the imagination, the comforts of speculation throwing as favourable a light as possible on the mystery of human existence; and it was this concession from the great empiricist which Lange welcomed so warmly. Mill, of course, had learned his Religion of Humanity not from Germany but from Comte.

Finally, Emerson, in America, aided and fortified by his own transcendentalism, had insisted to the point of paradox on the moral autonomy of the self ("if I am the Devil's child, I will live then from the Devil"). "The progress of religion is steadily to its identity with morals," he said. "The commanding fact which I never do not see, is the sufficiency of the moral sentiment." And he prophesied, "America shall introduce a pure religion."

II.

Adler crossed from the America of Emerson to the Germany of Lange, and he was influenced by both these, as well as by the Hebrew faith in which he was brought up, and by the prophet of Nazareth and by Kant. It was a world in which many were groping for a new religion, a modern faith: a genial time for spurious religious movements. The authenticity of the Ethical Movement is to be tested in Adler himself. He was neither an eclectic nor an opportunist. At Marburg, under Hermann Cohen, he made a thorough study of Kant; he had a strong intellectual grasp of Kant's system, and was able to criticize it and adapt it as an instrument of his own thinking. That sufficed on the purely theoretic side, for he found here his strength and independence which enabled him to concentrate with almost sombre intensity on the moral problem which preoccupied him. For Mill, for Lange, for Adler, for any sensitive conscience at that time, the moral problem had concrete shape in the evil of exploitation, conspicuously, the exploitation of women and of labour. Here was the violation of human personality on a profligate scale. And why not? There was no answer which could justify itself. Kant had not provided one: his practical imperative, *Act so as to use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always as an end, never as merely a means,* had only the universality of the desire of all men to be so treated themselves. There could be no obligation in Kant's world of subjective individuality. Hermann Cohen had said to Adler sharply that if there is to be anything like religion in the modern world, Socialism must be the expresson of it. But why should anyone believe in Socialism and work for it, unless it served his interests in the social struggle? The view which Adler worked out for himself on Kant's theoretic foundation saw in our moral nature witness to the ideal unity which subsists between human beings, and the prophecy of its actualization. That unity is the ground of moral equality, which means the indispensable uniqueness of each member of the moral community. Moral worth is not the actual worth of each, but is attributed to him in virtue of his membership of the whole, because as a human being he must fall within the ideal unity, and his unique worth is actually elicited in him by our action towards him. This uniqueness of each makes possible the correlated unique differences of all the rest, and is the principle of unity subsisting between all human beings. This abstract ideal pattern of human relations is obviously a highly theoretic

construction, an aesthetic construction. Adler justifies it elaborately and competently by using his critical adaptation of Kant's philosophy of mind. In Book II. of Adler's *An Ethical Philosophy of Life*, the Practical Reason is doing its job with a fuller understanding of what it is about than in Kant's *Critique* itself.

There are four observations to be made about Adler's theory as it concerns the Ethical Movement. (1) Whatever objection may be made to his Ideal of the Whole does not dispose of his primary contention that ethical principles are different from empirical generalizations in requiring an ideal of the whole by reference to which they can be justified, judged, and used: a conception of the whole is the only possible ground of their necessity and principle of their use, and without one we are therefore in the dark both as to certainty and as to application. (2) Abstract as Adler's moral ideal is, an aesthetic ideal, it is a reflex of actual social relations. "Social relations," writes the sociologist R. M. Maciver, "are simply those elements and functions of personality in each which are dependent on the elements and functions of personality in others"; and he asks, "Why should this law of reciprocity (and more than reciprocity) characterize communal life? Why personal values should essentially harmonize and not essentially conflict, why the activity which furthers each distinct personality should not only be made possible within community but should on the whole and essentially further and be furthered by the corresponding activities of other personalities—this is the deepest question of social philosophy, part of the great integral wonder of the unity of the cosmos, of the fact whose completer understanding is the aim and result of all our knowing, that we do in truth live in a universe." Adler has no illusions about the status of the ethical universe which he postulates. It is the product of the rationalizing mind. It is required by man as a moral agent to give validity to his idea of right. The world is to be used instrumentally for the purpose of verifying the existence of this universe. The Idealist is a Pragmatist. (3) The ethical ideal is not a dogma nor an object of worship. Members of the Ethical Movement were never asked to accept Adler's philosophy nor his conception of the ethical whole; it was offered as a constructive and fruitful principle. The movement itself was founded on the indefeasible moral autonomy of the conscience, the moral responsibility of the individual for his life—the *ne plus ultra of* Protestant individualism. Thus the movement has employed many philosophies, but has none. (4) Adler's theory gave him an independent standpoint from which he looked with unflinching eyes on the whole scene of his action: the vileness and folly of some men and the mediocrity of most; the cruelty of fate; the illusions and shallow assumptions which doom most of the hopes of mankind. He recognised steadily that the problems of society and the problems of personal life are desperately real and stubborn and that only the serious and devoted application of well-founded ideals will reduce them to anything tolerable. In the end there is an ultimate disparity between the ideal and the

actual, and, therefore, frustration is an ethical law. But frustration intensifies our hold on the ideal, our certainty of its truth, our affirmation of its necessity, that is, our ever-renewed acceptance of the obligation which it imposes on us: frustration in these circumstances induces a *nisus* towards social realization of the ideal, a religious movement.

Adler's moral philosophy was not a professor's theory. It was a principle of moral intervention, in society and in the personal lives of others. He rejected the Hebrew ministry, but he could not reject the ministry. The Ethical Movement from the first was a religious movement, by operational definition: it did the work of religion, with responsible confidence, with the most scrupulous care to meet with tested and reliable teaching the real problems and needs of men and women. If Kant's criticism had, in effect, resolved religion into ethics and myth, nevertheless its constructive task remained, and ethics, like Stoicism, disentangled from metaphysics and standing on its own feet, could not refrain from the task. It was Adler's thoroughly practical sense of the task, his vocation as a minister, combined with his intellectual grasp of philosophy and his moral response to actual evils, which made him a man of the time and gave an inevitable rightness to the origin of the Ethical Movement.

Other Ethical Societies were formed in the United States, and in Europe, in Italy, France, Switzerland, Germany, and Austria. In New York, Adler founded a school. The Movement took root.

III.

Four years after Adler founded the Ethical Society in New York, he was joined by Stanton Coit who gave up his post as a teacher of English Literature at Amherst College. He was then a young man saturated in Emerson, from whom he had already learned the root-principle of the new movement, viz., the moral self-dependence of every self-conscious human being, the impossibility of substituting religious dependence for moral self-dependence, of shifting or reducing primary responsibility in face of the question, How shall I live? Coit, one of an audience of some 2,000, listened each week on Sundays to Adler, studied political science at Columbia University, and discussed with Adler and his colleagues the aims and principles of the new movement. After a year's apprenticeship, he went to Berlin to study philosophy. Three years later, on his way back, he spent some months in London at Toynbee Hall, and when he returned to take up his appointment as Adler's successor he took with him the idea of the University Settlement, which he transplanted to the slums of New York City—the seed of a numerous progeny now widespread in America. Within two years he was back in London, invited to succeed Dr. Moncure Conway as Minister of the South Place Religious Society, which as a condition of his coming changed its name to the South Place Ethical Society. Here the Ethical Movement was grafted on a free

religious stock of a remarkable Anglo-American strain. South Place had a fine tradition, and was famous for radical religious views held with conviction and preached with eloquence and public spirit. Conway, himself an American of broad culture and a publicist, had completed his spiritual pilgrimage and that of South Place by bringing the Society to its radical goal of religious humanism. Conway had himself selected Dr. Coit, after listening to him in the Ethical Society in New York, as the right man to develop the South Place Society, and had recommended him to its members; for he had come to regard the Ethical Movement as the most living religious movement of the time and "as substantially one with the South Place idea."

Meanwhile, an independent move, assisted by Coit, had led to the formation of the London Ethical Society. Prof. J. H. Muirhead has given the following account of it, which brings out very well the parallelism of the times, showing the same tendencies here which had developed in Adler:

> There was still another group who had a rooted suspicion of any attempt to heal the wounds of social England by any external application such as the socialisation of the means of production must inevitably be. What was wanted was a change of heart and mind by directing men to the root principles of action and the conditions of permanent welfare in individuals and communities. The teaching of Kant had taken hold of one or two of the leading Universities, as Coleridge said of himself, 'with a giant's hand'. Caird in Glasgow and Green in Oxford were expounding a theory of Ethics and Politics which was new in the Universities, centering in the idea that the one thing of supreme value in the world was the good will, the one supreme rule for social guidance 'to treat humanity in thy own person and the person of others always as an end and never as a means only'. The bearing of this on industry and economics was seized upon by Green's pupil, Arnold Toynbee, the author of *The Industrial Revolution*; the more ethical and philosophical (as was perhaps natural) by the Scottish contingent in Balliol College who 'knew Caird'. 'I never knew two Scotsmen come together,' once said Canon Barnett, 'without forming a Society.'
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> Whether of their own initiative in this case they would have formed a society or not is doubtful. But just at this time Dr. Stanton Coit, an intimate friend and disciple of Dr. Felix Adler, of New York, and inspired by the same profoundly ethical spirit, paid a visit to London, and at University Hall, Gordon Square, and elsewhere met a group of men hailing from the three Universities of London, Oxford and Cambridge and kindled the latent fire into lively flame. If New York had an Ethical Society, why should not London? Even so the idea might have hung fire for want of support but for two circumstances. First, the existence of a small but ardent group in Streatham who had

banded themselves into a Fellowship of the New Life founded on the same ideas. With these the movers got into immediate touch through the medium of Mr. William Clarke. Even more important was the support that came at the very beginning from older University men. Bernard Bosanquet had left Oxford and was living in London. Henry Sidgwick in Cambridge was in sympathy from the first. R. B. Haldane (afterwards Lord Haldane) was one of the first to lecture.

The younger university philosophers came into the movement in the spirit in which they took on Extension lecturing or threw themselves into the educational work of the Settlements. But an Ethical Society was not a class in ethics, and they did not think that it was. From the first there was elaborate formulation of principles and aims, and development of them in the addresses. The main purpose was to disentangle moral ideas from religious doctrines, metaphysical systems, and ethical theories, and to make them an independent force in personal life and social relations. There was explicit disavowal of any attempt to form a religious society in competition with the churches: the independence and the importance of ethical principles were the express themes. The enlightenment of the conscience and fortification of the will by lectures, discussions, and the fellowship of the society: this was the broad aim, for the sake of an ethical foundation for social reform and an ethical outlook to survive the decay of religious conviction. There was an ambiguity in this aim which sooner or later was bound to be disclosed: it was impossible to expel the religious element from the Ethical Society, either the negative element or the positive, either the implied rejection of Christianity or the needed affirmation of an alternative. Later, Bosanquet and Samuel Alexander both withdrew for the same reason, viz., that the Ethical Movement was a religious movement without being able to supply the transcendent object of religious experience, which each of them interpreted in the terms of his own metaphysical theory, and justified his assumption by finding it a requirement of human nature (see, for example, the footnote reference to the Ethical Societies early in the last chapter of Alexander's *Space, Time and Deity*). This was, of course, mainly the dissidence of men of powerful minds and developed individual views; otherwise it was a fundamental misunderstanding of the relation between metaphysical ideals and ethical ideals in the religion of an Ethical Society .

Sir Leslie Stephen, who was actively connected with the movement until his death, had a broader view of the aims of the Societies than the academic philosophers. An Ethical Society, he said, should provide a meeting-place between those devoted to original thought or special research, on the one side, and, on the other, those engaged in daily contact with the complex concretes of practical activity. This was the basic condition of fruitful discussion. Thus might be developed in the Societies a thoughtful handling of all knowledge, a sense for the line of development in modern thought. This would equip them to sift and assimilate contemporary thought and knowledge in its bearing on real

human interests and needs. Then, with no claim to be missionaries of a new religion, they could attempt constructive discussion of the truths which it ought to embody or reflect, achieve the largest possible element of genuine and reasoned conviction for a new faith. The meetings of the Ethical Societies were thus a prolegomena to religion, the necessary preliminary discussions. He was anxious neither to exaggerate nor to underestimate the part which the movement might play in preparing the way for a new religion; and, like Lange, he had a clear view of the possible alternatives. Adler himself regarded his movement not as a new religion, but as an indispensable positive condition of a new *avatar* of the religious spirit. The rise of universal religious ideals must be the result of the moral evolution of modern society.

There was one other view of the new movement which was influential and important, and came from one who was not a professional philosopher. Sir John Seeley, Lord Acton's predecessor in the chair of Modern History at Cambridge, had openly rejected the Christian dogmas; but was by no means prepared to reject religion. What he feared in modern industrial society was the predominance of animal wants, the substitution of automatic custom for living will and intelligence, the failure of any imaginative view of the nature and destiny of man, the total lack of any moral greatness. Religion is and always has been the basis of societies and of States. It is no mere philosophy, but a practical view of life which whole communities live by. The church should be considered with reference to its end rather than its beginning; it is the organ of civilization, the interpreter of human society, in order that upon a full view of what is possible and desirable men may live and organize themselves for the future. This was the main thesis of Seeley's *Natural Religion.* He was not one of those (whom Mill attacks) who wanted to save Christian doctrine for the sake of the church's moral influence and social utility. On the contrary, he wanted the church to leave preoccupation with defence of its doctrines, as mere questionable opinions for ever vulnerable to the attacks of private judgment, and to turn to its proper guardianship of the unquestionable, viz., the moral identity of the nation, its place and part in the world, its duty to participate in realizing the ideal of universal civilization. The Ethical Societies were not to propose a new religion, but to help to fulfil this historic function of the church, and thus help to bring home to the clergy a practical conception of their real duty. Seeley here brought into prominence in the new movement the concrete universal of history, of civilization, with which it must be persistently concerned: the necessary complement of Adler's (or any other) formulation of the abstract universal of moral relations. The source of the moral ideal is not merely in the moral consciousness as such, but also in this historic society in this age. These two principles are fertile together, constituting the one principle of creative action whose integrity it is so important and so difficult to maintain—mutilated alike by Hegel and by Christianity.

Stanton Coit, who within four years of his coming to England had left the South Place Ethical Society and become leader of the West London Ethical Society, was profoundly influenced by Seeley's ideas, and in his book, *National Idealism and a State Church*, published in 1907 and dedicated to the memory of Seeley, he developed his own application of the view "that the real organic unit of religious life, of which any man is a member, is always the nation to which he belongs, in so far as the nation stands for social and personal ideals and principles. This view makes the Church the unit of religious life; but it identifies the Church with each nation as a society believing in and applying certain standards of civilization and culture, of duty and responsibility, of right and liberty." (This is the positive doctrine which the political religion of Fascism distorted into a romantic negation, affirming the moral identity of the nation by a nihilistic assertion of the will to power, denying and destroying the means and the ends of civilization by which that identity is to be realized.) The private judgment which had destroyed the distrines and the influence of the Christian church would not and could not destroy the inherent distinction between right and wrong, and the moral identity of the nation active in history making that distinction. The nation in its sincerity, in its inescapable moral responsibility, was the church and gave the church authority and called it to its task. Every individual was formed by social influences, but the best of these influences were indefinite and fugitive: they had to be brought into public consciousness, to be criticized and developed, and to be effectively applied. This was the historic religious task, and it obliterated sectarian differences on church government and metaphysical doctrines. Anglicanism ought to make good its national pretensions, ought to set aside supernaturalism and add to itself English literature, social democracy, and science. Then the church could claim to be the moral identity of the nation and to affirm its moral idealism; and the tension of that claim actively asserted against challenge and resistance would be the religious social dynamic. On this view, the Ethical Movement in this country could not be other than an unacknowledged party within the Anglican church, striving to influence its policy and practice, to bring it to a new conception of its national task. Coit consistently adhered to this position, and at the Ethical Church, Bayswater, applied his social idealism, his reading of English literature, and his study of the pyschology of religion to the construction of a new model for Anglican reform. This effort was looked at askance by most of those in the movement who were not Coit's personal followers, because they did not really understand what he was doing. He was certainly not playing at church. The Ethical Movement is founded on the principle that every human being as such is able to judge right and wrong for himself, once he is roused to do so, that this responsibility cannot be given away nor taken away, that there is no authority in the whole order of existence which has the power to prescribe right and wrong or the right to impose judgments. The Movement

affirms that this principle is paramount and all other beliefs and interests, however cherished, however important, are secondary. This is a challenge to the conscience of mankind. It is a most serious challenge to the authority and moral responsibility of churches. And it lies with special force against the Anglican church because of its special claims, privileges, and opportunities, its special position in the national life. Coit saw all this plainly, and he did not merely write a book about it; he had the courage to offer a constructive example of what he meant. The failure of the Ethical Church to attract any continuing interest among the Modernists of the Church of England does not exhaust the validity of Coit's practical and spirited contention. Moreover, not only did the Ethical Church press home a challenge to Anglicans, it was intended to offer a possible solution of the religious problem which faced the Ethical Movement; for the movement had to retain a total conception of the moral ideal, the social ideal, abstract and concrete, and not lose its purpose in social action. (The Ethical Society in Merthyr Tydfil had resolved itself into a branch of the I.L.P. and returned Keir Hardie.) Coit's solution, the objectification of moral values, was given by him a magnificent metaphysical background when, towards the end of his life, he translated for this purpose Nicolai Hartmann's *Ethik,* which was published in Muirhead's Library of Philosophy, with an introduction by the editor. This was the seal on his bold attempt to provide in the Ethical Church some practical indications towards the solution of a real problem for the modern religious spirit. His hope of saving for England the rich Anglican tradition turned his eyes from more fruitful possibilities. That hope belonged to an epoch which has now passed; it recalls a vanished world. The Ethical Societies have not yet solved their problem. They look back to-day on a wide experience, which has more fully revealed the character of that problem.

The Ethical Movement during these seventy years has not gained a great number of adherents, but it has shown itself capable of combining inner consistency with flexibility and adventure. It takes the ethical element in religion as paramount and universal for the future, and insists on its radical independence of doctrine. At the same time the Movement has not been in the least afraid of speculative philosophy, and has made bold use of diverse modern systems (Kantian, Hegelian, Phenomenological, Pragmatist), using them in the same sense, and without distortion, to give a hold on and confidence in human ideals. This steady ethical conviction and purpose (developing into a philosophy of civilization), on the one hand, and, on the other, speculative freedom and the imaginative handling of experience, promise authority and influence for religion in the future of mankind.

H. J. BLACKHAM.

SOME RECOLLECTIONS

IT is more than forty years ago that I walked from Hammersmith one Sunday morning to the Kensington Town Hall to hear Dr. Stanton Coit. This was the first time I heard him, having doubtlessly been attracted by the title of the discourse, which was to be on Herbert Spencer, who had recently died. Spencer had been my first philosopher and had impressed me so deeply that I was then inclined to believe he had superseded all those previous philosophical thinkers whose efforts to interpret the world I knew something about from G. H. Lewes's *History of Philosophy*. I was all the more taken aback by Coit's demonstration that Spencer's individualism was already quite out of date and that "state interference" which he used to denounce so vigorously was something to which all political parties in Britain were committed. Coit was then probably at the height of his powers. He was by far the most impressive speaker I had ever heard. His self-confident mastery of his theme, his unique style of delivery with its expressive modulations of voice, rhetorical pauses and dramatic gestures, reinforced by the distinction of his whole appearance, ensured the maximum of attention for whatever he had to say. His style was that of a man whose thought was accompanied by unusual intensity of feeling, and one which was dangerous for ordinary people to imitate. He was at least as much an artist as a moralist or a thinker. He was also a gifted teacher whose influence on young men who came into contact with him could be very powerful; so much so, indeed, that those probably derived most profit from him, whose natural resistance prevented their being positively moulded by his ideas. These ideas, as is natural, were somewhat different at different periods of his career, but there is no doubt that his most characteristic contribution to the Ethical Movement is embodied in the Ethical Church in Bayswater.

It was also at the Kensington Town Hall in those far-off days, which now seem to belong to another epoch, that I first heard Dr. G. P. Gooch. He gave an account, I remember, of the ideas of de Maistre and of certain other thinkers of the French reaction at the beginning of the nineteenth century. I was struck by the tolerant objectivity with which he presented views so different from his own; a thing which as a historian he no doubt took for granted as part of his discipline, but which doesn't come by any means easy to the natural man. One could even mention historians who have not yet acquired it. His lecture was a model of order and calm lucidity, qualities after which everyone may strive without danger. I soon introduced myself to Dr. Gooch's *Democratic Thought in the Seventeenth Century* which revealed to me how much laborious research must have preceded the composition of those balanced and polished sentences, while the later *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century* proved to be not only a fascinating narrative, but incidentally an incomparable guide to historical reading in many fields.

It was some years before the first world war that I first entered the dingy but venerable South Place Chapel. Moncure Conway's ministry was still a vivid memory there, but he has had no successor, and the platform was then occupied in turn by a number of appointed lecturers, whose quality attracted audiences as alert and thoughtful as any to be found in London. Here, too, there was a service, but of a Nonconformist type, the vestige of the older religious meeting, with an organ, hymns, and canticles, all of which tended to recede into the background; the old pulpit had already been transformed into a platform. On Sunday evenings the high-backed pews used to be packed to the verge of discomfort by music lovers who flocked from all parts of the town to the concerts of chamber music organised by the late A. J. Clements.

A speaker whom I heard there on a few occasions, who did not, I believe, often appear elsewhere, and whose name I mention now in a spirit of piety, was Herbert Burrows, a Socialist of an old school, possibly sharing the ideas of the Social Democratic Federation. I don't now remember a single word he said, but the impression of his character remains, and I believe I am not alone in associating his red tie and his white hair with the steadfastness and courage of the best pioneers of socialism in Britain.

One of the most constant speakers at South Place then, and for many years afterwards, was Mr. J. A. Hobson, the well-known economist. He had no oratorical gifts whatever, but was yet able to get an audience to give concentrated attention to one aspect or another of the impact of political and economic forces on social life. Hobson brought out the human meaning of these forces, isolating their ultimate implications so that they could be weighed in the moral balance. He was far from confining himself, however, to the field of his main studies; he often selected literary, philosophical and historical subjects as vehicles for his thought. He was a spokesman of liberalism in its later developments, challenging the assumption that the free play of economic forces could be trusted to make for human welfare. He was particularly hostile to the philosophy and policy of imperialism in which he saw the greatest danger of his time, driving on through colonial exploitation to social parisitism, hypocrisy, international rivalry and war. In appearance Hobson was of a type regarded by foreigners as characteristically English, tall and spare in figure, reserved in manner, deliberate in speech, averse from overstatement and economical even of emphasis. He impressed his hearers by conveying to them his deep understanding of his subject and particularly the ethical implications for the sake of which he expounded it. A foreigner would not be so far wrong who regarded this wise, courageous and kindly man as one of the finest Englishmen of his time.

One of his colleagues on the platform was Mr. J. M. Robertson, the foremost champion of Rationalism in England, who carried on the fight of Bradlaugh with more modern weapons and on a wider front. His commanding figure, his dark hair and shapely beard, his incisive and

cultivated Scottish enunciation, could not fail to arrest attention in any company and were particularly advantageous to a lecturer and debater who challenged prevailing prejudices. Robertson delighted in controversy; it was the stimulus that evoked his best energies. Some of his opponents must have had the surprise of their lives when they found themselves confronted by this formidable critic. His intellectual energy, capacity for acquisition, and variety of attainment were astonishing. He worked in the fields of comparative religion, the history of thought, biblical criticism, ecclesiastical history, Shakespearian scholarship, as well as of sociology, politics, economics, and general literary criticism. I have heard some of his friends express regret that he dissipated his enormous energy over so many subjects instead of concentrating them on a *magnum opus* that might have furnished a measure of his powers. It may well be, however, that the tasks he chose to do afforded him the maximum of influence as they probably brought him the greatest satisfaction. Besides, it is not open to a writer who lives entirely or mainly by his pen to devote years to a work which, however valuable to posterity, might not, any more than Marx's *Capital,* pay even for the cigars smoked whilst composing it.

Robertson was never perturbed at finding himself in a minority, and even where his arguments failed to carry conviction their impact made a difference. His life was an embodiment of the intellectual virtues: the love of truth, the habit of accuracy and scorn for all the varieties of sophistry and evasion. He was ever the generous champion of those men and women present and past who had suffered and sacrificed in the cause of freedom of thought.

The career of Mr. Robertson already shows how close has been the connection between the Ethical and the Rationalist Movements. The activity of Mr. Joseph McCabe was another strong link between them. I first heard him in Fulham in the early days of the century, where he gave a series of lectures on evolution, illustrated by lantern slides. It is a question whether any single person has done so much as Mr. McCabe to disseminate an understanding of this subject in the English-speaking world. He seemed to me to be in the front rank as speaker and teacher. I was to hear him later at South Place where for years he was a regular lecturer with Robertson and Hobson. Having spent several years in a monastery, he possessed an inside knowledge of the ideas and methods of the Church, which enhanced the authority of his important writings on ecclesiastical history and contemporary Catholicism. He is another versatile intellectual worker. His biographies include such diverse personalities as Augustine of Hippo and G. J. Holyoake, the pioneer of Secularism. Master of several languages he has translated some important foreign works including Haeckel's world-famous *Riddle of the Universe.* Many will remember Mr McCabe's championship of Francesco Ferrer, done to death by Spanish clericals because of his work as an educational

pioneer. He is to-day as active as ever and has only recently thrown fresh light on the connection between the Catholic Church and the fascist conspiracy. The Rationalist and Ethical Movements may well be proud of the long association with them of a man who has done such conspicuous and such valuable work in the world.

Another former Roman Catholic who brought special gifts and attainments to the Ethical Movement was Mr. C. Desliste Burns. He soon attained wide recognition as a writer on social and philosophical topics, and was later appinted Stevenson lecturer in Glasgow. He possessed the born teacher's secret of getting his audience to participate in the mental adventure of his discourse. His gifts as thinker and teacher were nowhere more warmly appreciated than at South Place, where his death at the height of his powers was felt as an irreparable loss.

When it was that I first heard or met Harry Snell I have no recollection. He seemed to be everywhere and to do everything. He was organizer, speaker, and writer, and almost as well-known and as popular in New York as in London. He was the Father O'Flynn of the Ethical Movement. Member of Parliament for Plumstead, he finished with distinction in the House of Lords a career which began as a scarer of crows from the cornfields. The fundamental social problem of our time was for him not something learnt from books, but known as an inward experience. This accounted, perhaps, for a certain fervour which coloured his platform manner. He was more like a Nonconformist preacher than any other speaker in the movement. Yet he had a rare gift of fun which often flashed out merrily from the platform as well as in private intercourse. The position he attained in our public life is sufficient evidence of his ability. Lord Snell worked for many good causes in the course of his long and strenuous life, but nowhere was there fuller understanding and appreciation of his gifts and character or greater pride in their public recognition than amongst his friends in the Ethical Movement, which was his spiritual home.

I have spoken so far only of London, and I am not attempting to write a chapter of history, but only to record some impressions which have not the remotest pretension to completeness or even to a reasonable balance between one aspect of things and another. If this *were* a history I should linger over the names of many men and women in the movement whom I have known and valued, and from whom I have learnt much: F. J. Gould, that persuasive teacher and indefatigable worker Dr. F. H. Hayward, Gustav Spiller, Alfred Cloake, G. E. O'Dell, Horace Bridges, H. J. Golding, Dimsdale Stocker, Dr. Batteson, Walter Hogg, Miss Boileau, Miss Nellie Freeman, Miss Winterbottom, and many more; and I should not forget the hundreds of less conspicuous workers whose unpretentious enthusiasm sustained the different groups that existed before 1914 in various parts of the metropolis.

On looking back now over more than forty years, I am sure that the feeling of clarification, orientation, and stimulus I derived from con-

tact with the Ethical Movement was not illusory. It is rather important at this moment, when a new departure has to be made, to realise as exactly as possible what the nature of its influence has been. It does not propose any new philosophy or offer a final solution of any ancient problem. It is not the custodian of any revelation, nor has it any message for the world that is not already in the conscience of all modern men of goodwill. The movement was one of the organs by which society became conscious of certain results of nineteenth century development: the incredibility of many religious beliefs accepted by even the previous generation; the superfluity of any particular religious or indeed metaphysical belief as a basis or sanction for conduct; the increasing discrepancy between our notions of freedom, rationality, and justice, on the one hand, and the actual social order, on the other, reinforced by the experience of a world slump and the two most devastating and murderous wars in history. In other words our movement has been an organ for the social assimilation of modern experience, the development of an outlook adequate to its comprehension and of a practical attitude to it which will satisfy our conscience. That work is never done once and for all. It involves a continuous creative activity. Thinkers and reformers, whom we all revere, have helped to transform the world, and we are assuredly the inheritors of their inspiring tradition; but their prescriptions are not sufficient for our time, nor can they be said to have established any eternal principles which their descendants have merely to apply to new contingencies. Many of the topics which occupied us before 1914 were peculiar to a period and are being superseded by new ones appropriate to the new epoch, which has seen the rise and fall of fascism, the emergence of Soviet communism over one-sixth of the globe, the striving of hitherto dumb colonial peoples in Africa and Asia towards participation in civilization and liberty, and the control of atomic energy with its unimaginable promise and its too easily imaginable danger for all mankind. Could it not be said also that our conceptions have been so far affected not only by the conditions of an epoch, which was inevitable, but by the unconscious limitations of sympathy of a particular social class, the fairly comfortable and cultured urban middle class? The working class, which, after all, constitutes the overwhelming majority of the people, looks elsewhere for guidance and inspiration.

The importance of ethical leadership should increase rather than diminish in the age now opening out before us. It promises to be an age of transition to socialism and to world government, and of change at least as rapid as that to which we are now endeavouring to adjust ourselves. This means that we shall be confronted with the necessity of many social decisions in different spheres, and every such decision is ultimately an ethical decision. In such a situation there is some danger of bewilderment and pessimism unless there can be found somewhere a means of understanding and orientation.

There is not the slightest reason to doubt that, now, as in the past,

new thinkers and new institutions will emerge to fashion in accordance with the needs of a new time that philosophy of life and death which is as essential to our inward peace as is economic and political democracy to our material welfare. The Ethical Movement seems to be well qualified by its history to find a leading place amongst the progressive trends of the new order. Who can say that its development so far may not have been the preparation for a greater mission?

JOHN MURPHY

BOOK REVIEWS

THE RATIONALIST ANNUAL, 1946. C. A. Watts and Co.; 2/- paper, 3/6 cloth.

The R.P.A.'s annual miscellany this year divides into two groups: four essays by Lord Russell, Professor Haldane, Lord Raglan, and Dr. Julian Huxley on various aspects of the scientific world picture; and the remaining six which are concerned with various Rationalist topics, and include a rather pathetic apologia from Dr. Joad who gives an honest account of his faithful (intellectual) flirtations and leaves still a little room for hope of an eventual happy marriage. The essays in the first group should be read together, for they boldly paint the changeful scientific landscape under zestful human weather—an invigorating piece of work. Professor Haldane returns to his advocacy of Milne's cosmological theory, which is attracting great interest and is of the first importance. Dr. Huxley shows that neo-Mendelian research in the last twenty years has definitely vindicated Darwin's principle of natural selection, and has explained many puzzles which disturbed the faith of earlier Darwinians. Lord Russell explores the dubieties in the age-old controversy between mentalists and materialists, and traces the effect of recent scientific work on the traditional views. Lord Raglan considers the bearing of anthropology on the making of a much-needed doctrine of human progress: the over-hasty generalization of earlier days from anthropological fact to social philosophy has warned modern anthropologists to stick to their field work and their statistics, but the time has come for us to try to learn and to apply the lessons provided by these studies. These essays are all very stimulating, and they give the incentive and the line for more serious study—if there is anyone left who has the time for it.

Among the other essayists, Mr. Gowans Whyte deals very effectively with the Anglican report *Towards the Conversion of England*, putting the spotlight on the immense resources of the Church for its propaganda, which is the background to a letter from Mr. C. S. Lewis to the Chairman, in which he says, 'No evangelism can have wide success against the continual glut of cheap scientific books written on atheistic principles'; a

handful of Rationalist publications threatens to defeat the omnipresent influence of a great organization. The Church is like the capital of a vanished empire, or an immense industrial undertaking which has lost its main market. The social changes which have transformed the situation demand a far more realistic adaptation than there is any evidence of in the report.

Mis Marjorie Bowen recalls some radical novelists of more than a hundred years ago, now forgotten, but worthy to be remembered and to be raised into a standard by which to judge the far greater names of the nineteenth century, as courage measures timidity. Mr. Howell Smith considers the appeal of Rationalism to the younger generation, and insists on the fundamental ideal of Rationalism and its hostility to the dogmatist in every shape and in every quarter: Rationalism is the provisional authority of reason exercised in liberty. Mr. Archibald Robertson examines the sinister part played by Catholic propaganda in world politics. A church which has far-reaching political power and is hostile to the dominant social trends of the time is simply bound to be a continual source of mischief: it must be expected, and the evidence of it is not far to seek. Mr. Robertson ends with a rousing Protestant call to Britons "to show these mischief-makers that they overreach themselves, and that as 'the Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England,' so his political and journalistic minions have neither part nor lot in the shaping of our domestic and foreign policy."

Altogether, the Rationalist Annual this year, its sixty-third year of publication, is up to the mark and on the spot. Its avowed object is to provide a platform for liberal thinkers in general agreement with Rationalism. Some of us would be very glad to see liberal thinkers avail themselves of this platform to construct and to criticize a developed humanist alternative to Christianity. After all, Lord Raglan is right when, after quoting Miss Edith Durham on anthropologists, "We are always grinding corn, but we never bake any bread," he concludes for himself, "It seems to me that a half a loaf, even if somewhat overdone, is better than no bread." For sixty years there has been plenty to say in a Rationalist miscellany for Christmas reading. Has not the time come when what is said shall, in the main, be said to a common purpose, an increasing purpose? Humanism is not a metaphysical system, but it has a positive content and a genuine programme; it is coherent and aims at completeness; its adherents can be bold and clear-headed about their assumptions. Unless and until liberal thinkers address themselves critically and constructively to this theme, and as a matter of course, there will be no developed alternative giving a spine of thoughtful purpose to everyone who has learned to think for himself. The mother-liquid of Rationalism is now concentrated to the point when we should expect to see crystals of this salt. If not, we must raise the temperature.

EUROPE SPEAKS. Edited by Mary Saran. International Publishing Co., 6d.

This is the first number of a publication which declares its aim to be "through the publication of reports, documents, and articles, to help towards a better understanding of the Europe of to-day." This issue prints extracts from a resolution adopted by the Social Democratic Party of Rumania on September 30, 1945, an article on the Tito régime, a report on conditions in Yugoslavia by a correspondent who has just returned after nine months' stay there, and a critical examination of a *Primer and Reader for People's Schools and Illiterate Adults*, which has just been issued in Yugoslavia. The documents are used to show the light breaking in Rumania and the shadows deepening in Yugoslavia.

The document from Rumania is of special value in helping to correct the prevalent misunderstanding here which is reflected in the Government's policy of non-recognition. Rumania offers perhaps the best example in Europe of the contemporary difficulty of establishing democracy by democratic methods: installed in power by the Russians, would-be democrats of the Left have to use strong measures or succumb to the near-fascism of the big parties. Democracy can only come in as a counter-revolution to fascism. However, it is not an uncommon paradox of morals that principles have sometimes to be violated in order that they may be made practicable. We ought to have a better understanding of the difficulty, and help Rumanian democrats to turn this awkward corner by recognizing the Groza Government, instead of standing upon our own classic example in stupid insularity.

The documents on Yugoslavia certainly make very unpleasant reading. Probably Yugoslavia has had a better press in this country than on the whole she deserves. Probably admiration for Tito and the partisans has made us too ready to be blind. Nevertheless, Yugoslavia is the last country in Europe on which to pass easy judgment. The State, and with it the political parties, disintegrated. Where else have the partisans so strong a claim to have re-created not only the national will, but also, through their local administration, the State itself? How different were these local committees, for example, from the National Committees formed in Czechoslovakia as instruments of arbitrary government at the hour of liberation. Yugoslav ex-politicians will be as active as ex-politicians always are, but the claims of the Opposition do not make a strong *prima facie* case. Already in this country there are demonstrations against the new Yugoslavia. There is plenty to object to, and the evidence will keep coming in. All the more reason for keeping our heads and starting from the premiss that the partisans have identified the country with themselves. There is a measure of justification for that, but how much of what flows from that ought to be tolerated?

The complexity of fact in modern Europe is dangerously bewildering. The situation in each country is different and the parallels are misleading. Doctrinaire analysis and doctrinaire solutions are more than ever inappropriate. Any publication which honestly tries to make this Europe speak to us is doing an invaluable service.

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